



## Washington State Fusion Liaison Officers Advance Public Safety, Tribal Info Sharing

Posted by Joe LaPorte, PM-ISE Senior Tribal Advisor on Tuesday, September 18, 2012

The Washington State Fusion Center's Fusion Liaison Officer (FLO) program started in December 2010 with 19 students from around the state. In this program, the Fusion Center trains public and private sector representatives who are positioned to help identify and report suspicious activities. (Read more about the Washington State Fusion Center and FLO program in [Kshemendra Paul's recent blog post](#) <sup>[1]</sup>.)

The Fusion Center now has 742 Fusion Liaison Officers from law enforcement, fire department, critical infrastructure/key resources, military, and tribal. In addition, the program offers professional development training, which recently included explosives awareness training, as well as progressive training, where the inaugural iteration of the Intermediate FLO class will be held this month, September 2012. As the PM-ISE Senior Tribal Advisor, I am very familiar with Washington State Patrol Chief John Batiste's commitment to tribal safety and information sharing, so I was very pleased to help build tribal representation in the FLO program.

### Washington State Tribal Law Enforcement

Washington has 29 tribes across the state covering over three million acres of land that borders Idaho, Oregon, Canada, and the Pacific Ocean. The program currently has nine law enforcement officers from four different tribal police agencies and four FLOs from the Colville tribe, which is the largest tribal police force in Washington.

## Tribal Representation in FLO Pays Off

Washington State law enforcement works closely with tribal law enforcement in combating criminal activity. This partnership has continued to grow over the years and during the 2010 Marijuana Eradication season, state and local law enforcement worked closely with DEA to eradicate over 322,000 marijuana plants. That same year, while working closely with tribal law enforcement, they eradicated 82,000 plants from tribal lands alone.

In May 2010, the Washington State Fusion Center (WSFC) was asked to provide assistance in a number of unsolved arson cases. A total of 63 arson fires occurred in the tribal lands of the Colville Indian Reservation and National Forest in Colville, WA over the course of more than seven years. A Request for Service was submitted to conduct an assessment in order to determine possible motives and responsible parties for the arson. After reviewing and analyzing seven years worth of case information, the WSFC analysts systematically organized the information, evidence, and case resources. They enhanced the success of the investigation by coordinating information sharing between disparate agencies, realigning the allocation of investigative resources for future multi-jurisdiction arson cases, and prepared a table-top exercise to help identify process gaps and mitigation measures. WSFC support resulted in the identification of an additional suspect and the remediation of motives to deter future arson.

### What's Next?

The FLO program is continuing to grow, and the Washington State Fusion Center expects to have over 800 total participants by the end of the year. Although only four tribes currently participate in the FLO program offered by the Washington State Fusion Center, we are working to recruit representatives from all 29 tribes. I am proud to support the Fusion Center's active outreach efforts to foster relationships with current and future tribal participants.

**Photo credit:** [Washington State Department of Transportation](#)<sup>[2]</sup>

### Related Blog Posts:

[Ever Local & Evergreen: A tour of the Washington State Fusion Center](#) <sup>[1]</sup>

[The Small World of Public Safety Information Sharing](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

[Tribal Safety and Justice: My Testimony to the Indian Law and Order Commission](#) <sup>[4]</sup>

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[1] <http://ise.gov/blog/kshemendra-paul/ever-local-evergreen-tour-washington-state-fusion-center>

[2] <http://www.flickr.com/photos/7821771@N05/2352497713/>

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